IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1-8 and cancel claims 9-11, without prejudice, as follows.

Claim 1 (currently amended). <u>An article of manufacture comprising a computer usable medium</u> <u>having computer readable program code means embodied therein, the computer readable program</u> <u>code means for a</u> [A] network system comprising a plurality of individual service providers each having access points, and a parallel service provider connected to the plurality of individual service providers [and]<u>, makes a roaming contract with the plurality of individual service providers and</u> including an authentication server, <u>the computer readable program code means</u> comprising:

<u>computer readable program code means for causing a computer,</u> [wherein] when the access point of the individual service providers receives a connection request from a user who contacts with the parallel service provide, [the providers] cause the authentication server to perform user authentication and

<u>computer readable program code means for causing a computer</u> to connect the user to a network through the access point in acccordance with a result of the authentication.

Claim 2 (currently amended). The [network system] <u>article of manufacture</u> according to claim 1, wherein the user who contacts with the parallel service provider sends a connection request containing a domain name of the parallel service provider to the access point, and the access point determines whether the user contracts with the parallel service provider in accordance with presence of

absence of the domain name.

Claim 3 (currently amended). The [network system] <u>article of manufacture</u> according to claim 1, wherein the parallel service provider is connected to the plurality of individual service providers through an exclusive line.

Claim 4 (currently amended). The [network system] <u>article of manufacture</u> according to claim 1, wherein the plurality of individual service providers send respective user connection recordings to the parallel service provider.

Claim 5 (currently amended). <u>An article of manufacture comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied therein, the computer readable program code means for a</u> [A] network connecting method<u>, the computer readable program code means</u> comprising:

<u>computer readable program code means for causing a computer to send</u> [sending] a connection request from a user to an access point of any one of a plurality of individual service providers;

<u>computer readable program code means for causing a computer to determine</u> [determining] by the access point whether the user is a member of an individual service provider including the access point or a member of a parallel service provider that <u>is connected to the plurality of individual service</u>

providers and makes a roaming contract [contracts] with the plurality of individual service providers;

computer readable program code means for causing a computer to execute [executing] user authentication processing by the access point itself when the user is a member of the individual service provider, and to connect [connecting] the user to a network in accordance with a result of the authentication processing; and

computer readable program code means for causing a computer to cause [causing] the parallel service provider to execute user authentication processing when the user is a member of the parallel service provider, and to connect [connecting] the user to the network in accordance with a result of the authentication processing.

Claim 6 (currently amended). The [network connecting method] article of manufacture according to claim 5, wherein the user who contracts with the parallel service provider sends a connection request containing a domain name of the parallel service provider to the access point, and the access point determines whether the user contracts with the parallel service provider in acccordance with presence or absence of the domain name.

Claim 7 (currently amended). The [network connecting method] article of manufacture according to claim 5, wherein the plurality of individual service providers send respective user connection recordings to the parallel service provider.

Claim 8 (currently amended). An article of manufacture comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied therein, the computer readable program code means determining an [An] electronic mail address [determination system], the computer readable program code means comprising:

computer readable program code means for causing a computer [means for], when a user name is input, to determine [determining] whether an electronic mail address including a combination of the user name and any one of a plurality of predetermined sub-domains has been registered; and

computer readable program code means for causing a computer [means for], when the electronic mail address has been registered, to determine [determining] an electronic mail address including a combination of the user name and another sub-domain has been registered, whereby setting the electronic mail address and including a combination of a sub-domain not registered and a user name.

Claim 9. (canceled) A network connection device comprising:

means for, when a connection request is issued from a user, determining whether the user is a regular member of a provider with which the user contracts or a partnership member under a given contract with the provider;

means for, when the user is a regular member, executing user authenticating processing and connecting the user to a network in accordance with a result of the authentication processing; and

-6-

means for, when the user is a partnership member, transferring a connection request to a specified authentication server, and executing user authentication processing and connecting the user to the network in accordance with a result of the authentication processing.

Claim 10. (canceled) The network connection device according to claim 9, wherein the partnership member inserts a predetermined domain name in the connection request, and the determining means determines whether the user is the partnership member in accordance with presence or absence of the domain name in the connection request.

Claim 11. (canceled) The network connection device according to claim 9, wherein the specified authentication server is connection to network connection devices of a plurality of companies and used in common.